

'That which is good for the working class I esteem patriotic ...' James Connolly.

'battle' of the butchers

FOR MANY YEARS the profits of butchers have been the envy of the Limerick 'jet' world. At golf club bars and other drinking holes 'master' butchers have been heard to boast openly about the vast amounts of money they are making. To people paying the current prices for meat it will come as no surprise to learn that some of the biggest butchers in Limerick are clearing a weekly profit of between £400 and £500.

Limerick butchers have long enjoyed a nice little-tight little set-up all to themselves. With only 16 slaughter houses among the city's 44 victuallers, the butchers who own and control the slaughter houses operate in a near monopoly situation. The smaller butchers co-operate fully in this system and are allowed to use the slaughter houses at the discretion of the bigger butchers. The selling price of meat is therefore tightly controlled by the ring of leading butchers.

Meat, bought wholesale, for an average price of 22p per lb., is being sold in Limerick butchers' shops, for an average of 45p per lb. When the profit from the hide, liver, heart, tripe, etc., of a slaughtered animal is taken into account, it is clear that butchers are making a profit of well over 100%.

It is against this economic background that the 'abattoir affair' must be considered. First mooted about 100 years ago, the Limerick abattoir was finally built and opened by the Corporation, at a cost of £160,000,



over a year ago. The members of the Limerick Master Butchers refused to use the abattoir and have since used every type of threadbare argument and transparent tactic to justify their opposition to it. Among their constantly changing objections were:

- (1) That the abattoir charges were too high;
- (2) That their workers and their trade union, the Limerick Beefbutchers' Society, would not work or co-operate with the supervisor of the abattoir on the grounds that he is an 'outsider';
- (3) That the abattoir was constructed without full consultation with the Master Butchers;
- (4) That the abattoir is not viable for group working, and would be too congested;
- (5) That because of labour and transport costs in bringing meat to and from the abattoir, meat prices would increase;
- (6) That the butchers could build new slaughter houses at their own expense thereby saving the taxpayers money.

The butchers believed few of the objections themselves and merely used these as a delaying and highly successful negotiating tactic in their dealings with the Corporation. After over a year of obstruction and haggling, they have whittled down the abattoir charges from £1.25 to 75p per head of cattle and from 37½p to 20p for sheep, as well as winning notable concessions in storage and refrigeration facilities. No one pointed out during the negotiations that the original charges could have been met many times over by the sale of the hide, heart, liver or tripe of a slaughtered animal.

The most ironic aspect of all was the skilful manner in which the butchers manoeuvred a section of trade unionists into joining forces with them in opposition to the abattoir. The members of the Limerick Beefbutchers' Society have a close and unique relationship with the master butchers and many of the 'masters' are former members of the Society.

The militant opposition of the Society to the abattoir supervisor stands out in marked contrast to its servile record in tackling the wretched

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CONFRATERNITY IN CRISIS

LIMERICK'S REDEMPTORIST Confraternity is in decline. The Confraternity, once world-famous as the biggest of its kind in the world and synonymous with Limerick itself, is now reduced to a shadow of its former size. All through the late 'forties and 'fifties, and even at the time of its centenary in 1968, it claimed a membership of over 10,000. It now openly admits to a paper membership of 5,000, but a headcount at its combined weekly

meeting earlier this month (March), showed that only 2,100 men and boys attended.

A 'completely new approach' and reorganisation of the Confraternity was recently announced. A new director, Fr. Vincent Kavanagh, has been appointed and he will be assisted by a team of four priests and two Brothers. Already they have embarked on a 'social service' type policy. A special Confraternity Employment Agency has

been set up and a social club for married couples has also been formed. In an effort to boost the falling membership, a competition is being introduced with a prize of a specially designed banner for the section with the best attendance record.

The Limerick press has always been remarkable for its attitude of grovelling servility to the Confraternity. On this occasion,

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CONFRATERNITY IN CRISIS

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however, it responded to the changes in a surprisingly frank way. In two searching interviews in the 'Leader' and 'Echo' Fr. Kavanagh gave his reasons for the Confraternity's decline 'shift work, the variety of modern social life which makes more demands on men than it used to, and the building of the new city around the old one which means that people are much farther away from Church.' Dealing with the new aims he said: 'Emphasis was on prayers ... going to Mass and the sacraments ... all good things ... but really only half religion ...'

'It is not a question of squeezing a person's soul into Heaven. It is trying to get a full human life for every person ...'

In the second interview Fr. Kavanagh added: 'At this stage we have done a lot of rethinking. And out of this rethinking we feel that it is a priest's duty to be with the people ... And why we have drawn up these schemes is to get a reasonably good job and a reasonably good social life for people. We will be visiting homes and places of work and discussing people's problems with them.'

The Confraternity was founded in 1868 at a time when Limerick was a city of unemployment, poverty and disease-ridden slums. Workers have always constituted the overwhelming majority of its members. From the start it was organised into divisions with military-type regimentation. At present there are three men's divisions and a boys' division and each of the four divisions meets separately on a weekly basis. Many of the Confraternity's hymns, such as 'Confraternity Men to the Fight' also reflected this military influence. Medals, with ribbons of varying hues are worn by members to mark their 'loyal attendance.'

The Confraternity has been notorious for its fanatical and demented type of religion and for the power exercised over its members by its clerical leaders. It is also unique for the manner in which it has created the impression of an all-embracing fellow-feeling among all classes in Limerick. Some of its directors have been hair-raising and incredible figures. Perhaps the best-known of all is Fr. J. Creagh, who said: 'The Jews are a curse to Limerick, and if I have the means of driving them out, I shall have accomplished one good thing in my life. Over a period of six months he stirred up the Confraternity members with lurid tales of Jewish sexual and financial exploitation. His campaign resulted in most of the city's 150 Jews being attacked, boycotted and finally driven out. The Confraternity in no way regretted the campaign and saw nothing incompatible between the pogrom and its form of Christianity. It passed the following motion: 'We

tender to Father Creagh our very best thanks for his recent lectures on the ways and means of the Jewish trading, and that this meeting, representing 6,000 members of the Confraternity, express the fullest confidence in his views.'

It had been pointed out in vain that out of the 1,387 civil bills presented in Limerick in 1903, only 31 were issued by Jews. The Catholic Bishop of Limerick condemned the campaign and completely dissociated himself from it. In a diocese where such a large segment of Catholics were kept under the tight rein and influence of such a religious order, this clash of interests was not to be the last of its kind and it highlights the sensitive and often uneasy relationship that has existed between the Confraternity and successive bishops. Fr. Creagh's hallucinations presaged the obsession with sex subsequently shown by many other directors.

Another later example of the potent influence of the director when, following a fiery sermon denouncing the 'immorality' of a film of Sean O'Casey's 'Juno and the Paycock', a number of Confraternity members forced their way into the projection-box of the city cinema and burned the offending film.

Up to the late 'fifties unemployment was high, wage rates low and entertainment was even more acutely felt by young workers and a weekly visit to a dance was often considered a luxury. Enrolment and participation in sodalities benefitted and the period marked the peak of Confraternity power and Catholic culture in Limerick. The cinema was the only form of cheap mass-entertainment which embraced both sexes and which offered any opposition to the dominance of this position. It was inevitable, therefore, that the Confraternity should find itself drawn into battle with the menacing force.

Less than a decade ago the Confraternity fought its last great battle against 'immorality'. It was a campaign against 'indecent' books and films and the 'carry-on' of courting couples 'in the dim back rows' of city cinemas. The director who found himself leading the crusade, Fr. Gerard Mahon, became engulfed in a sea of imaginary sex and was finally totally discredited as a priest and as a person. There are good reasons, however, for believing that Fr. Mahon was led into his folly by lay members of the Confraternity.

The ground was carefully laid and the campaign had all the hallmarks of an organised job. It began, innocently enough, on January 5, 1963, in the letters column of the 'Limerick Leader', when a writer signing himself 'Terrified', complained about 'war stories' with 'disgusting pictures' on sale in local shops. This letter was the signal for a flood of similar

letters from people signing themselves 'Terrified (2)', 'Parent', 'Anxious Parent', 'Young Parent', etc. One of the few writers who did sign his name was a leading member of the Confraternity, Frederick Fennessy, an accountant and a member of the management of James McMahon, the firm of Timber Importers and Saw Mills owners. Fennessy, who on one occasion was heard to complain that yard labourers at McMahons were overpaid, wrote to the 'Leader' on January 19, stating: 'It would seem that the vigilance committee suggested by your correspondents is now a pressing need. I understand that definite moves were made in this direction before the incident, which gave rise to this correspondence and that such moves are being continued. I feel that all conscientious Limerick parents should associate themselves with this desirable movement.'

In the same edition of the 'Leader' another writer suggested that the Director of the Arch-Confraternity would be the right person to organise a deputation ... Fennessy followed up with a further letter on February 9 in which he stated that 'it is also clear that the "positive action" which he (another writer) belatedly suggests has already been taken.' The young and inexperienced Fr. Mahon only entered into the fray at this stage. He threw himself wholeheartedly into the campaign and sermons, statements and condemnations followed fast and thick. The suggested vigilance committee was quickly formed to watch out for books, films and courting couples in cinemas and just as quickly it became a laughing-stock, not only in Limerick, but also in newspapers, throughout the world. Fr. Mahon visited newsagents, bookshops and even libraries. He objected to a poem, written in Italian, in a County Library book, stating that the poem was so lewd that if one read it, one would have to go as far as Rome to obtain forgiveness. He even tried to enlist the support of cinema workers and their union. He called a meeting of the workers at Connolly Hall after the cinemas had closed for the night. He then proceeded to give a long lecture to the tired and hungry workers on their moral responsibilities. The meeting only came to an end when one worker declared that he had heard enough and announced that he was going home to his wife and family.

The campaign was a fiasco and ended in ridicule and failure. Subsequently Fr. Mahon left Limerick, the Redemptorist Order and the priesthood and took up employment as a clerk in a bank in America. The sick-minded 'vigilantes' who planned the whole affair slunk silently out of sight. And once again no effort was made to explain what had happened or to assuage the feelings of guilt and the mental distress inflicted on impressionable and scrupulous young minds.

(To be continued).

JIM KEMMY ON

CAN THE GAA BE SAVED?

'IF RURAL IRELAND is to be saved, the GAA, because of its great national tradition, is the best equipped organisation to spearhead the task,' Pat Fanning, president of the Gaelic Athletic Association, stated at a recent GAA function, in Limerick.

GERRY BURKE on

the nationalist myth part three

PINNING DOWN and defining a nationalist mythology is fraught with difficulties. What in fact is it? Where did it come from? What circumstances or situations gave rise to it? In Ireland it had its origins in the question of whether or not the Irish people should be exploited by home-bred or foreign capitalists.

The myth has overtones of a kind of national masochism—a desire for pain to achieve virtue. It also has a large element of idealism and, of course, it vibrates an aura of national liberty, freedom and independence of sinn fein ('ourselves').

It is sad to reflect that even James Connolly, the great Marxist—the one revolutionary hope for Ireland, with his organisation of armed workers, got caught in nationalism. This was one more terrible penalty the working class had to pay for its truck with the myth.

In the new cultural and economic conditions of the EEC myths of nationalism will be irrelevant, and the degree of enlightenment of the Irish workers will be shown in the numbers who will say 'good riddance'. And all the way to its limbo in Tir na nOg.

The ordinary people wanted freedom to live decent lives. An analysis of motives supports the view that nationalism was created by the emerging wealthy middle classes, who, while always ready to assert their right the exploit the Irish people, never really wanted to break with Britain.

The wheel has now turned full cycle. It is ironic that after 800 years of shadow chasing we should now find ourselves as nothing more than a piece of economic and political flotsam before the surging tide of international capitalism. Before the shivering Cathleen Ni Houlihan is taken from her condemned cell and escorted by Lynch and Hillery to her European death chamber, let us have one last look at the price we have paid for keeping her alive for so long.

Apart from this empty declaration, Pat Fanning did not even attempt to outline his plan for saving rural Ireland. Few, however, could doubt his claim about the GAA's 'great national tradition,' and no one could deny that Fanning himself has been one of the most vocal leaders in the fight to preserve this 'tradition'.

At the GAA's 1971 annual congress in Belfast, rules 27, 28 and 29, which debarred members from playing, organising or even watching 'foreign' games, were finally abolished. During the debate Fanning showed that the narrow, insular attitude, which produced these rules and which characterised so much of the GAA's work, has not gone. In criticising those who dared to propose the deletion of rule 26, he said that it would be 'a rejection of the very basis of the GAA's national thinking, a betrayal of those who made the GAA organisation the living embodiment of Ireland a nation one and undivided. The GAA proclaims its allegiance to the proposition that this is one nation under the flag. Those who support the maintenance of two states in Ireland, who are in fact sworn to deny national unity, cannot have a place in our organisation. They are not excluded by rule merely. They are excluded because, implicit in membership of the Association is acceptance of the Association's declared aim—to create a free, Gaelic Ireland.' ('Irish News', 12-4-'71).

So, according to Fanning, even if Northern Protestants wanted to join the GAA, they would be excluded until they recanted their democratic right to choose their own destiny as a nation. And, in a memorably trophy-presentation ceremony in Croke Park, on the eve of last year's Lynch-Heath talks at Chequers, Fanning took full advantage of the televised occasion to make one of the most political speeches of the year in exhorting Lynch to 'free' Ireland.

Another example of the GAA's attitude to Northern Ireland was given by John D Hickey, in an article 'The Gaelic Athletic Association Exhilarates Irishmen'. He wrote: 'Some there may be who are so divorced from every national aspiration that they do not even know what the three letters "G-A-A" stand for, but there is no doubt whatever, that they are in one way or another, even if their attitude is quite unreasonably hostile, influenced by the Association. Time and again that has been brought home to me at various venues in the artificially sundered part of our country by comments usually indignant, about 'profanation of the Sabbath'. Some may not like the Gaelic Athletic Association, they may even hate it with the intense spleen of the bigot, but they are compelled to be conscious of it as a great power in the land and

there is nothing in the world they can do to stay its onward march.' ('The Capuchin Annual', 1960).

In the same article Hickey claimed that the GAA was 'at least 50,000 strong' and went on: 'One who knows anything about the country is fully aware that Gaelic football and hurling provide more entertainment and enjoyment for our people than all other forms of amusement, modern and old, combined. At rural cross-roads, where the young and old gather together in the summer evenings, hurlers and footballers are almost invariably the topics of conversation. It is the same story at the creamery in the morning or in the village halls and at houses where neighbours meet 'cuardaiochtin' (visiting) in the winter evenings. Indeed, I know at least a half dozen families in my own locality who, in my young days, worked out a strict rota to decide which son would go to the creamery in the mornings to meet the other boys of the neighbourhood to discuss the matches.'

But times have changed, even for the GAA, and this idyllic picture now seems like a memory of a long bygone age. The increasing industrialisation of the country, beginning in the early '60s, the flight from the land, the advent of television and the popularity of soccer, especially in the cities, have all weakened the GAA's membership and influence.

Commenting on the declining playing standards in a survey conducted by Paddy Downey, Limerick's greatest hurler, Mick Mackey, stated: 'In my young days, we practiced whenever we could, which was nearly every evening and every Sunday morning. Maybe we had nothing else to do—and that the young men and boys of today have too many distractions.' ('Hurling at the Crossroads,' 1965).

In the same survey, Paddy Downey writes: 'In the city (Limerick) and its once powerful hurling perimeter, the standard of the game has not only fallen, but the number of players from minor grade upwards has also decreased. When the Limerick City Board was formed in 1935, there were 18 clubs (all grades) in the area. Of that number, only seven now remain. The total is eight, Old Christians being a recent addition. Yet the activity in the schools is greater than ever. Nearly every primary schoolboy in Limerick city plays hurling or gaelic football. Most of them are lost to the GAA when they leave the primary schools. Many go to soccer and rugby.'

Georgie Best is now 'bigger' among Limerick schoolboys (and schoolgirls) than Mick Mackey ever was—such is the power of modern communications. Whatever about 'saving' rural Ireland, Fanning will have his work cut out in saving the GAA in the Ireland of the 'seventies'.

bishop casey's 'all-out war'

'I APPEAL, take housing out of politics, whether spelled with a large or a small P. Let us have a national housing commission, which draws on the best brains of the country, whether within or without the governing political party or the existing civil service ... Finally, let us devise imaginative and courageous policies that are determined by the real need and let us then call on the community to make the sacrifices necessary to achieve them. For a change let the human need not only dictate the policy but also generate and demand the resources necessary to implement that policy. Surely a minimum requirement is a separate Minister of Housing, or better still, a National Housing Commission that is above politics.' (Bishop Eamonn Casey, 15-2-'72).

On the same day, in a Dail debate, one of the political representatives of Irish capitalism, J. Tunney, Fianna Fail, said that 'under the mantle of the building industry, robbery was taking place in Dublin. In the last ten years young people wishing to get

married has been robbed by the people in control of the industry ... the number of developers, builders, legal men and others who, in the past decade especially, had been rocketed into unbelievable and oftentimes vulgar affluence on the backs of the young people ... Members of the legal profession were getting profits from houses not in proportion to the services rendered. He did not see how a solicitor could justify a fee of £100 from the house purchaser in a development, when all he had to do was to draw an agreement in respect of one house in the scheme and then run off sufficient copies for all the other house purchasers. It was also happening that one solicitor was acting for vendor and purchaser and was more concerned with the interests of the vendor, despite the fact that the purchaser had paid him £70, £80 or £90'.

To round-off this housing picture, Fr. Paul Freney, in a letter to the 'Irish Times', on 6-3-'72, wrote:

'One part of society thus exacts tribute from another for the permission to inhabit the earth, as landed property in general assigns the landlord the privilege of exploiting the terrestrial body, the bowels of the earth, the air, and thereby the maintenance and development of life.'

(Karl Marx: 'Capital')

'I was most impressed by Bishop Eamonn Casey's recent appeal for an all-out war on inadequate housing. Few men can speak from such a wealth of personal experience as Dr. Casey in this regard. I hope it is not impertinent of me to urge him to throw his weight behind an attack on the factor which above all else is responsible for the increase in the cost of housing—the cost of building land. No other item in our society costs as much in relation to its cost ten years ago as the price of a site for a house. It is the equivalent of a pint of milk being priced at 50p ... But where building land is concerned, the sky is the limit ... I read

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LIMERICK MEMBERS of the Workers' Association travelled to Wexford for a meeting of branches on Sunday, 27th February. Chaired by Eamonn O'Kane, the speakers were Pat Murphy, a member of the Dublin Branch of the Workers' Association, and Jim Kemmy, chairman of the Limerick Socialist Organisation.

In his introduction, Eamonn O'Kane gave a brief history of the Workers' Association. It was formed in September 1971 and its purpose was an attempt to deal with the deepening conflict between the two working class communities in Northern Ireland. The Workers' Association based itself on the position that in Ireland there were in fact two nations, and that the essence of the conflict in Irish society was the demand by one of these nations to dominate the other, i.e., the Catholic nation dominating the Protestant nation.

The Workers' Association sees the root cause of the conflict as the undemocratic demand of the Catholic nation.

Eamonn O'Kane said that the Workers' Association was the only working class organisation to adopt this position. 'It is a position which encounters very intense opposition, both from the more overt Republican parties and the covert Republicans,' he said.

Pat Murphy spoke on the importance of the Two Nations position in relation to the trade union movement.

He said that 40% of the trade union

report

membership in this country is in the North of Ireland. He estimated that almost 30% of the trade union force is Protestant.

'So you are bordering on the one third of organised working trade unionists who are not going to belong to a 32-county Republic, which is the aim of the present campaign in the North,' he said.

Pat Murphy went on to deal with the building of Socialism, and asked how can Socialists, taking a trade unionised working class, ever achieve Socialism when you propagate a Nationalist movement which splits up that working class force.

'If the Protestant population were forced into a 32-county Republic and practiced the same disruptive tactics (as the Catholic minority), it would be impossible for a 32-county state to survive,' Pat Murphy said.

Jim Kemmy criticised the Labour Party policy on the North, and said it was not really new at all. 'It is merely a gloss over the old traditional Labour Party policy,' he said.

The policy states that the attainment of Socialism in the 26-counties would be a step of vast importance towards the goal of an All-Ireland Socialist Republic. In working for Socialism,

the policy document states, the Labour Party is also working for National unity.

'But the policy statement does not say in any way that the so-called for National independence is merely the struggle of Southern Capitalism to subjugate the Northern Protestant community and to bring it under control of the Southern state,' said Jim Kemmy.

He asked how was the Northern Protestant community to be brought into a so-called 32-county All-Ireland state 'How this is going to be achieved is totally ignored in the document. I have seen no attempt to justify this or explain how it is going to happen. How they claim Ireland is one nation can be squared with the facts of history and the development of Partition is not dealt with in any way,' he added.

He said the question we must face is whether the Northern Protestant majority has the right to remain as part of the United Kingdom state or that they must be forced against their will into a Southern Catholic Nationalist state ... 'This is the question we must face,' said Jim Kemmy.

Dealing with the Two Nations theory, Jim Kemmy said that he had been involved in a controversy in promoting this position in Limerick.

'I have found that all the Republican and Sinn Fein people, Officials and Provisional, have been unable to refute this position on the Northern conflict,' said Jim Kemmy.

bishop casey's 'all-out war'

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episcopal condemnations of drunkenness, of illegal organisations, of contraception. How I'd love to see an episcopal condemnation of the immorality involved in the exploitation of our people's need for a home by greedy men. Or are the exploiters too powerful and too obvious to merit a swipe of a crozier?

Workers are vitally concerned with the housing problem, whether they are on a Corporation housing list, living in a local authority house or buying a 'private' house under the Small Dwellings Act. Bishop Casey and the other two commentators did not point out that the housing problem, no less than any other confronting workers in our society, arises from the nature of the capitalist system of production and cannot be ended without the abolition of that system. In analysing the housing question a hundred years ago, Engels stated:

'As long as the capitalist mode of production continues to exist it is folly to hope for an isolated settlement of the housing question or of any other question affecting the lot of the workers. The solution lies in the abolition of the capitalist mode of production and the appropriation of all the means of subsistence and instruments of labour by the working class itself.'

In Ireland there is abundant labour, land and building materials for housing. Few can doubt that an urgent social need exists. But, instead of houses for workers, we see office blocks, hotels, luxury houses and flats being built. The rate of profit to be made from building offices and other such buildings is far greater than could be made from providing houses for workers. This is not difficult to understand. It is the general law of capitalist society that the demands of the working class, which constitutes the majority of the population, are met at a minimum, while the demands of the capitalists themselves are met at the maximum.

As far as profit-making is concerned, there is no demand for inexpensive houses for workers. In a capitalist system the indicator of social need is the rate of profit. If a market (as against social) demand exists for a particular commodity then capital will flow into its production to meet the demand and to make profit. The manner in which this happens is clear-cut: throughout the economic market there exists a general or average rate of profit, so that the capitalist who invests £1 million in housing should make about the same profit on his investment as one who invests the same amount in making shoes. Nevertheless, while there exists an

average rate of profit, the actual rate of profit fluctuates in certain sectors (due to technical development, demand, etc.). When profits are higher in these sectors, capital flows into them from the lower profit areas. In these circumstances if there exists a social need which cannot be expressed in profit-making terms, then it will not normally be met. That is why there is no rush to build lower-priced houses for workers.

Despite Bishop Casey's 'wealth of personal experience' and his reputation as a housing expert in Britain, his call for a 'non-political' solution and to 'let the human need not only dictate the policy but also generate and demand the resources necessary to implement that policy' completely ignores the realities of capitalist society. He did not even advance the demand to 'deal' with the speculators' by placing restrictions in their way, as did the Fianna Fail deputy Tunney.

It is usually implied by housing critics and reformers that 'speculation' in a capitalist society is something peculiar to the housing sector. But this is far from true. Speculation is a normal and characteristic feature of capitalism and is not at all confined to 'unscrupulous' profiteers—as we are often led to believe. Buying and selling in land, shares, government bonds, raw materials, agricultural and industrial produce, currencies and so on take place every minute of the day. All this speculation is carried on by the most 'respectable' pillars of society—the leading banks, insurance companies, stock brokers, solicitors and all sorts of dealers.

However, when it is convenient, the capitalist politicians conjure up 'unscrupulous' profiteers and crooks to account for some part of the system which has—temporarily—been exposed and caused the capitalist class embarrassment. But these 'profiteers' and 'gangsters' are none other than government ministers, financiers and industrialists—they are, in fact, the most 'respectable', even church-going, members of the 26 counties' ruling class.

Housing, therefore, is not an isolated sector of speculation, robbery and corruption which exists on its own, but is an integral part of capitalism. Socialism can only come into being as a result of the abolition of capitalism by the working class, and the substitution of production for use rather than profit. And then, in the words of Karl Marx: 'From the standpoint of this higher form of society, private ownership of the globe by single individuals will appear quite absurd as private ownership of one man by another.'

poems

CUT-LINES

I die a thousand deaths in newspaper offices
Finger an endless taped typography of happenings
In a tone-deaf mindscape.
There's no future, and yesterday's forgotten
Answer the phone and tell them
Answer, they want to hear more—
Ah, man, we're tired ... we've bored ourselves.

The clock is a time-vice, of time too late,
Time sufficient and deadline time,
All is present like a bad seat in a slow train
Lurching through a hundred miles of night-time.

I must complain to the management
My mind is stuffed with cigarette butts
And clogged full of the expected.

What now?—where, when and how?
After the metal news has been collated
And moulded for the breakfast table
Should I embrace the wet streets
And share thirty-three thoughts with a bottle
And deal with cries in a smokehaze ...?
Or should I walk slowly home ...?

P. C. O'M. 1969.

08920 *
come and join us

RISE, for the day is passing, and you lie dreaming on; the others have buckled their armour, and forth to the fight have gone.

connolly's socialism

'... Is not this attitude symbolic of the attitude of the Church for hundreds of years? Ever counselling humility, but sitting in the seats of the mighty; ever patching up the diseased and broken wrecks of an unjust social system, but blessing the system which made the wrecks and spread the disease; ever running divine discontent and pity into the ground as a lightning rod runs and dissipates lightning, instead of gathering it and directing it for social righteousness as the electric battery generates and directs electricity for social use. The day has passed for patching up the capitalist system; it must go ...'

('Labour, Nationality and Religion').

COME TO WORK IN KRUPS

'THE STANDARD of workmanship by Irish and German workers was equally efficient.' This statement was made by Frieder Krups, managing director of Krups Engineering Works, when he visited his Limerick factory on June 1 last year. Mr. Krups did not give any comparison between the wages of German workers and Limerick workers nor did he suggest that the 'equally efficient standards of workmanship' should get equal wages.

The fact that weekly wage rates in the local Krups factory are as low as £17 for men and £12 for women, apparently caused the wealthy German industrialist little concern. The current wage agreement between the company and the workers is due to expire on March 31 and new negotiations are taking place for a new agreement.

On February 10, eleven lower-paid workers employed in the sales department went on unofficial strike action in support of a demand for better wages. Most of their fellow-workers did not pass the strike pickets.

On February 16 the 'Limerick Leader' carried the following report: Fingerprint experts from the Technical Bureau, Dublin Castle, were to-day examining the scene at the German-owned Krups factory in Roxboro Road where a shot, allegedly fired through an office window about 9 o'clock last night, was believed to be intended for Mr. Karl Mamzec, works manager ... It is understood that Mr. Mamzec was sitting at his office desk on the right corner of the factory building when the alleged shot came through the window. Efforts by the Gardaí to locate the bullet have not been successful so far ... A group of workers standing outside the factory gates at the time of the alleged shooting incident, stated that 'the whole thing is a hoax'. No bullet was found by the fingerprint experts, Mamzec himself or by journalists who inspected the scene.

On February 19 the Limerick No. 2 Branch of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union issued a statement on the front page of the 'Limerick Leader': 'The union condemns in the most emphatic manner the attack made by a person or persons unknown, on the works manager of Krups Engineering Ltd., Mr. Karl Mamzec, when a shot was fired through his office window. The union also wishes to assure the German nationalists and other families, and indeed, all non-nationalists in the region, of its

full and continuous co-operation in the matter of mutual interest and concern. Efforts are being made to effect a settlement of the dispute. Signed: William Boland, Branch President; Vincent Moran, Secretary.'

The union statement was a clear case of over-reaction, as no evidence existed to prove that a shot had been fired and no bullet of any kind had been found. In view of the members' emphatic denial of any knowledge of the alleged 'shooting incident', it was an incredibly bad blunder for a union to link its statement of condemnation with the information that 'Efforts are being made to effect a settlement of the dispute.' The statement, though showing touching concern for the welfare of Mr. Mamzec, a works manager, who earns over £100 a week, made no mention of the meagre wages of the striking members.

The lack of evidence did not prevent Krups from escalating the affair and from making the maximum amount of capital and publicity out of the alleged 'incident'. On February 21, during a High Court case to secure an injunction against the striking workers, Declan Costello, S.C., speaking for the company, claimed that 'there was evidence that "shots" were fired at one stage into the office.' Again no effort was made to furnish this evidence.

Since the strikers returned to work, no effort has been made by the union to have these statements, and the similar allegation made by a member of Krups management against its members withdrawn. The union has also failed to ensure that the victimisation tactics being practices against four members, who return to work was obstructed and delayed by Krups, were discontinued. Members of the union have also complained that, in over seven years employment in Krups, they have never seen or handled a union card because of the 'check-off' system of the firm, stopping union contributions at source.

In the workers future action in trying to improve wages and conditions, they must not allow themselves to rush head-long into situations where they can be out-manoeuvred and defeated by Krups. They must ensure that full union support is brought in behind them in all further efforts to secure their demands.

FIND THE BULLET COMPETITION

Join in the Great Mamzec Murder Man-hunt.

Where is the Missing Bullet?
Was a Bullet fired?
Who fired it?
Why wasn't It Found?
Was it all in Mamzec's Mind?
Information Required.

PRIZE:

1 Hard-boiled, under-sized,
German Sausage.



FIND THE BULLET ... AND YOU ALSO FIND ME

eec illusions

by tony crowley

'IF THIS application succeeds it does mean the end of the independent trader.' Though Frank Fitzgerald, chairman of the Limerick Alliance of Independent Retailers, made this statement in objection to the proposed erection of a £250,000 supermarket and shopping complex, at Rosbrien, his words could well have applied to the country's application to join the EEC. Fitzgerald, a small-time capitalist and supermarket owner, is also chairman of the Limerick Common Market Defence Campaign. A consistent opponent of EEC entry, his opposition is based purely on the interests of the class, the small-time capitalists, who will lose out in free-trade conditions, and has nothing whatever to do with working class interests.

The basic appeal to workers made by the Common Market Defence Campaign is that Irish industry cannot stand up to free competition from British and European industry; that if it is exposed to this competition it will be virtually destroyed and that therefore their jobs will be lost. The only answer to be made to this prediction is that Irish industry failed to become competitive under economic protectionism and that the country's industrial development has been openly based on the strategy of inducing British and other foreign industrialists to come here to provide employment as a by-product of their profit-making activities.

The choice facing Irish workers in the coming referendum is between two types of capitalism. Outside the EEC we will have small-time capitalism (the old pre-'sixties variety). In the EEC

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part one

by joe kemmy

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the drug scene and you

THE LIMERICK press has taken a number of 'trips' into the world of drugs in recent months. Articles have appeared pointing out the growth in drug-taking, especially among young people, and calling for action to combat this growing abuse.

That trendy group of cockroach capitalists, the Limerick Junior Chamber of Commerce, has announced details of a drug education programme, aimed mainly at the 2,500 pupils of the city's 17 post-primary schools. In a statement it says:

'All doctors and pharmacists, etc., would now agree that drug abuse is increasing steadily ... Like so many other ills, it comes in the wake of industrialisation and our competitive society. Lack of proper recreational facilities, overcrowding, restless and very often forgotten young people help to provide the breeding ground for escapism. The grind of surviving in our modern society is a major contributory factor to our drop-outs and eventually the sub-culture of drugs.'

In a competition, sponsored by the Junior Chamber, the winning essay, written by Carmel Ryan of Presentation Convent, deepened this analysis:

'But the reasons why people take drugs are more important than the effects the drugs have on them. Before you can eliminate drug addiction you must eliminate the social evils which cause people to resort to them as an escape route ... Social injustices are the chief causes of drug addiction. They separate society into hippie colonies, ghettos and back-streets, and it is here drug-taking is mostly practiced. Society has produced an accelerated world. It has created mass-hysteria, paranoia and chaos. More and more people are taking tranquilizers, amphetamines and sleeping pills. Mothers of large families and businessmen forge doctors' prescriptions in order to obtain barbiturates ... Altogether society has created a pusillanimous people who crawl into little boxes 'to get away from it all'. '... It is society that it sick, and the drug-taker is only one of the symptoms of its sickness. To eliminate the indiscriminate usage of drugs we must first purgate and cure our society, for if the body is weak and slow to react because of a hole in the heart, we do not first try to repair the hole in the heart, and thus let the body function, and not try to stimulate the body into reacting and allowing the hole to grow larger.'

How does drug-taking effect the different classes of people who make up our present society?

In the world there are three main classes. The ruling class, the monopoly capitalists, are the people who own most of the wealth. People who have their money simply because they exploited people who were unable to stand up for their rights.

The second class we see is the middle class. These are people who live in the fashionable parts of our city and send their sons and daughters to college. This class is mainly composed of professional people and others in what is called the upper income bracket.

Finally, we have the working class. Living in Corporation housing schemes, they form the largest class but have the least amount of the wealth. They comprise the workers in the factories, shops, building industry, etc., and they are ruled by the capitalist class.

In all three classes we have drug abusers. But the working class suffers most.

The ruling class (capitalists) realise that they cannot control the workers if they are not alert on all occasions. Therefore the ruling class does not indulge in drug taking to any great extent, except some members of the ruling class 'jet set' who live it up in the world's fun places at the expense of workers.

Our middle class are extremely clever. They realise that they have a chance of becoming the ruling class if they can successfully exploit the workers. Therefore the middle class refrain from taking 'hard' drugs and settle instead for marijuana and hash, dreaming about the 'beautiful people' and 'nice society' we should be. This point is particularly relevant when we look at the influence of television. Depicted there, is the middle class. The lovely people, the 'bright new world', the 'exciting life' and 'why haven't you got a cheque book?'

Lastly, we have our working class, the most exploited of all. Who can the working class exploit? The answer is no one. Instead the workers are like glorified messenger boys running about at the beck and call of the middle and ruling classes. After years of work and struggle what does the worker achieve? Almost nothing. He will still be living in the Corporation housing schemes, and subjected to the snobbery of the middle classes. This treatment often manifests itself in indifference and drinking and in the case of some young workers in drug-taking.

(To be continued).

we will have big-time capitalism (free-trade variety). There is no third alternative--and there is certainly no socialist alternative on the horizon. It is not correct to say that EEC entry is solely a capitalist issue. All workers will be affected by entry or non-entry and should be aware of the implications involved.

The Limerick Socialist Organisation does not regard the EEC as a workers' utopia. The community is a capitalist trading area in which workers will still be exploited. It is, however, an improvement on the present position or on 'pie-in-the-sky' alternatives like the mythical United Socialist States of Europe. Any worker old and honest enough to remember the protectionist conditions of the 'hungry 'fifties' knows that his living and working conditions have improved under free-trade.

The relative success of the free-trade policy as against protectionism (or as against the 'go-it-alone' schemes of some of the anti-Common Marketers) is illustrated by the numerical increase in the working class in the last decade. In 1951 the number of workers employed in industry in the 26 counties was 283,000. This figure progressively declined each year afterwards, until 1958, when it reached 243,000. Economic protectionism had then completely exhausted its potential.

The Common Market Defence Campaign committee has claimed that much of the unemployment, now standing at 78,000 people, has been caused by free-trade and that this trend will continue in the EEC. But the committee does not explain what caused the even higher unemployment and emigration under protectionism. Unemployment is part and-parcel of the capitalist system, whether it be free-trade or protectionism, and can only be eliminated through socialism.

It is inevitable that some workers will become redundant on the country's entry to the EEC. But to deliberately link the unemployment situation with anti-EEC propaganda can only serve to confuse the issue, weaken the class solidarity of workers and lead the growing unemployment agitation into a blind alley. For Limerick workers to join with discontented small businessmen, like Fitzgerald and other anti-working class elements in opposing EEC entry frustrates the growth of a united working class movement.

The politics of the Common Market Defence Campaign in opposing the development of the productive forces of capitalism are thoroughly petty-capitalist in their nature. People like Fitzgerald fear the effects of the developing monopoly capitalism which must, inevitably, destroy them. But the working class has nothing to fear from the growth of the productive forces and it is not in its interests to prop-up tottering gombeen men.

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'butchers'

continued from front page

working conditions of its members. The primitive and foul conditions of many of the dungeon-like hovels that passed for slaughter houses, and in which its members were forced to spend much of their working days, failed to draw even a squeak of protest from the Society. These Dickensian relics survived, 'alive' with rats, and unburdened by any concessions to modern sanitary or hygiene requirements. The cruel practice of killing animals in the sight of other animals was also a regular event in these places.

At no stage did the Beefbutchers' Society complain or attempt to mobilise their fellow-workers and the people of Limerick in support of a campaign for better working conditions and for cleaner meat. Instead, the fact that the new-found militancy of the Society about a different and relatively minor issue has coincided with, and received the full encouragement of the master butchers has not gone unnoticed.

Wittingly or unwittingly, the workers have allowed themselves to be used, not in the interests of their fellow-workers, or in the interests of cheaper and cleaner meat, but in the interests of a small, money-grabbing clique.

If the workers are dissatisfied with the appointment of the foreman, let them disentangle themselves from the campaign of the master butchers and 'come clean' by (1) openly stating their objections to the qualifications of the foreman and (2) by exposing the alleged political pull used in the appointment.

It should be noted here that many of the officers and members of the Society are also 'outsiders', and a big number of the members of the master butchers likewise come from many different parts of the country. It should also be said that political influence has always been widely used by both the master butchers and members of the Beefbutchers' Society in seeking

'plum' jobs and contracts. Government patronage is, of course, taken for granted at all levels of Irish life and jobs from Supreme Court judges to unskilled labourer, have always been distributed by the political party in power.

And what of the campaign of the master butchers? What were the real reasons behind their refusal to make use of what has been described as 'the most modern abattoir in Europe, for its size and cost'? Their reasons were, of course, sound economic ones. Because of their control over the buying and killing of animals, the selling of the meat and the overall volume of their trade, most butchers had little difficulty in evading much irritating taxation. Because of the change to having their animals killed and inspected at the abattoir, the leading butchers fear that the true volume of their trade will be disclosed and that this could bring the unwelcome attention of the taxman. Many butchers are also dab hands at 'doctoring'

inferior and contaminated meat and this lucrative game will be ruled out in future. With the abolition of private slaughter houses, all butchers will operate from an equal base and this has caused some of the bigger butchers to fear that more competitive shops will be opened and that this may lead to the emergence of more butchers all trying to get on the gravy train. It has been suggested that this is the reason behind the alleged bid by a group of butchers to gain control of killing rights at the abattoir and to deprive the small butcher of the right to kill his own animals.

Not content with making fat profits while giving an unhygienic service, these butchers have cost the people of Limerick almost £20,000 by their refusal to use the abattoir. But the butchers are not upset; after all, what are the rights of the people against the rights and 'efficiency' of 'private enterprise? Their claim to be 'master' butchers is in doubt, but few can doubt that they are past-masters at bleeding the people.

city comment: leaders or lackeys

DOWN THE GLEN CAME McDERMOTT'S MEN WITH COMPLAINTS SLUNG BEHIND THEM

At the last meeting of the Limerick City Council four members were elected to the Housing Destruction Committee and a further four to investigate the quality of whiskey sold in a certain city lounge bar.

The Pity Engineer denied that there was an excess amount of water in the whiskey. At the sound of his favourite word Ald. Grieve Mocklan, T.D. was quickly aroused and started to go through his well-worked act. 'I want to know what it would cost to pump milk through the city water mains,' he asked.

'Listen to the milkaholic,' said Ald. Kat Kennedy.

'Go away and pump on the bandwagon,' interjected Ald. Kick Flipper.

'I agree with the proposal,' said Sen. Fed Mussell, 'we have to give the people something.'

Cllrs. Gory Bidy and Daddy Smiley queried the cost.

Cllr. Slick Pearls suggested that a bun be provided.

Someone in the public gallery shouted. 'Where did you put your buns?'

With that remark, Councillors broke into hysterical laughter, and uncontrollably rolled around the floor. Tears streamed down their faces and one even tried to eat the agenda. Another swung from the light bulb roaring 'buns away'.

Cllr. Plank Beddin pointed out that the Corporation could then sell the much-needed water at 5 new pence a bottle.

Before the meeting broke up in complete disorder it was agreed to adjourn to the lounge bar in question to investigate, and undertake the serious task of tasting the whiskey.

At 1.30 a.m. a Garda Squad car was

called to a certain city pub where the select committee was being forcibly ejected.

In William Street Garda Barracks the hard-worked committee broke into song, and rendered 'Sergeant Bring Me Water,' 240 times. With the dawn came hangovers, and the select committee was smuggled out of the station disguised as Ban Gardai. The Pity Manager went bail, and had the charges dropped. The Sinister for Justice, Mr. Messie O'Dalley, expressed an interest in the case and a 1,420 page file was sent on to him.

The Pity Manager was advised to keep his boys out of pubs, and he sent Cllr. Gory Bidy to count the number of lights working in the Ballinaslurra area.

Cllr. Slick Pearls was dispatched on a bicycle to Ballypanty, to find out how many people had blue books.

When all the excitement had died down, the Pity Manager was heard to say. 'I can't afford to lose this crowd, they're the best bunch of lackeys I've ever had.'

connolly quote

'Ireland as distinct from her people, is nothing to me; and the man who is bubbling over with love and enthusiasm for Ireland, and can yet pass unmoved through our streets and witness all the wrong and the suffering, the shame and the degradation brought upon the people of Ireland--aye, brought by Irishmen upon Irishmen and women, without burning to end it, is in my opinion, a fraud and a liar in his heart, no matter how he loves that combination of chemical elements he is pleased to call 'Ireland'.'

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